



Student Complaints Policy

SCOPE OF THE POLICY

1. New College of the Humanities (NCH) is committed to ensuring a high quality educational experience for its students, supported by appropriate academic, administrative and welfare support services and facilities. However, there will be instances when students may feel dissatisfied with the teaching and learning, facilities or services provided by the College or with the way the College or its staff have acted or omitted to act.
2. If, however, it is necessary to pursue a complaint formally, this Student Complaints Policy and Procedure (herein referred to as 'the Procedure') sets out how students may seek to have complaints addressed. The aim of this Procedure is to deal with student complaints as expeditiously and fairly as possible.
3. The policy will be carefully monitored and reviewed on an annual basis by Academic Board. The Registrar will review all student complaints on an annual basis and review, with the Academic Board, to see if there is any pattern of behaviour or service that is generating dissatisfaction from the student body.
4. This policy and procedure is not related to student discipline, which is addressed by the [Student Code of Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures](#).
5. This policy and procedure is applicable to NCH undergraduate and postgraduate students. Both groups of students will follow this policy.
6. The complaints policy should not be used to appeal against decisions made by the Progression and Awards Board for undergraduate students and the Examination Board for postgraduate students. To appeal academic decisions, students should refer to the relevant Programme Handbook and/or speak to the Registrar.
7. All complaints made by students are kept confidential. Only faculty or staff involved will be contacted and reminded of the strict levels of confidentiality. Students will not be penalized in any way if they make a complaint. If the complaint is about a member of faculty, it will not be assessed by this member of faculty and the College will find a suitable replacement assessor.
8. The documentation created from the complaint will be stored in a secure location and will not be recorded in student files.
9. The Student Wellbeing Coordinator (SWC) is able to provide advice on submitting a complaint. In all cases students are strongly encouraged to seek impartial advice concerning their complaint.
10. A student should make every possible effort to resolve their complaint within the relevant faculty or department. The formal procedure can take some time and should be used only if the informal resolution stages have been exhausted.

DEFINITIONS

11. A complaint is defined, by the UK Quality Code¹, as the expression of a specific concern about the provision of an academic or related service by New College of the Humanities. The procedures set out below can be used by students to complain about any service NCH provides.
12. The Office of the Independent Adjudicator² defines a student complaint as: “an expression of dissatisfaction by one or more students about a University’s action or lack of action, or about the standard of service provided by or on behalf of the University”.

WHO CAN MAKE A COMPLAINT?

13. The following people or groups can complain:
 - 13.1. Current College students
 - 13.2. Current College students taking a break in their studies
 - 13.3. College alumni
 - 13.4. Groups of current College students

IS IT A COMPLAINT OR FEEDBACK?

14. There are several ways in which students may put across views about their learning experience and the services provided by the College. This is referred to as “feedback”. Feedback can be provided through a number of channels, such as: direct communication with members of academic or service staff; through Student Representatives who can raise it at the Student-Staff Liaison Committee; student feedback surveys held at the end of Michaelmas and Hilary terms; and the annual student satisfaction survey. The following procedure is for matters which may be of a sensitive nature, require direct action, and/or are confidential.
15. Complaints may relate to (though not be limited to):
 - 15.1. The teaching and learning experience of the student, e.g. quality of teaching, teaching facilities, personal tutor support.
 - 15.2. Academic services, e.g. computing and library service.
 - 15.3. Administrative services, e.g. registry, finance office, etc.
16. The Student Complaints Policy excludes certain specific complaints where NCH has separate policies to deal with these. An Academic Appeal, for example, is defined as a request for a review of a decision of an academic body charged with making decisions on student progression, assessment and awards. Academic Appeals are dealt with through the Academic Appeals Policy, which can be found [here](#).
17. In all instances where a student is unsure as to how or where to raise their complaint they should seek advice from the SWC or the Registrar.

¹ QAA, Chapter B9, Academic appeals and student complaints

² Office of the Independent Adjudicator: <http://www.oiahe.org.uk/providers-and-good-practice/good-practice-framework/contents/complaints-and-academic-appeals.aspx>

18. The College will not consider unsubstantiated complaints that it regards as vexatious or malicious. Complaints of this nature may result in disciplinary action under the Student Code of Conduct and Disciplinary Procedure.
19. Where complaints are received anonymously or from third parties, it will be at the discretion of the Registrar to determine whether the complaint will be considered and, if so, how.

UNDERLYING PRINCIPLES OF THE PROCEDURE

20. The Student Complaints Policy has been established with the aim, where possible, of resolving complaints informally through negotiation between those individuals who are immediately concerned with the matter and, where appropriate, their immediate line manager. The College recognizes, however, that some issues cannot be resolved by informal means and may require the intervention of outside parties. The formal stages of the Students Complaints Procedure are, therefore, available.
21. The underlying principles of the Student Complaints Procedure, which should be respected by all those involved in the procedure, are that:
 - 21.1. Complaints will be treated seriously, fairly, as expeditiously as possible and in a consistent fashion.
 - 21.2. Complaints will be treated in a rigorous and fair manner with sensitivity and with minimum stress to all parties concerned.
 - 21.3. Confidentiality will be respected throughout.
 - 21.4. Submission of a complaint will not lead to recrimination or adversely affect academic progression provided it is made in good faith and not maliciously or vexatiously.
 - 21.5. There is a right for any decision to be subject to further reference to the approving University (if appropriate) and the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA).

COMPLAINTS AGAINST STAFF

22. Any investigation that is conducted under the formal stages of the Student Complaints Procedures, and where an allegation against a member of staff is involved, must be conducted in accordance with principles that ensure a balance between the interests of the complainant and those of the member of staff involved. These principles include the expectation that there will be:
 - 22.1. An assumption of no fault until the balance of evidence from the investigation demonstrates otherwise.
 - 22.2. Respect towards the dignity of the individuals involved.
 - 22.3. The right of the member of staff to be told of the complaint and to know of the evidence presented by the complainant.
 - 22.4. The right of the member of staff to respond to the complaint and the evidence and to be accompanied by a colleague staff member in any investigatory meetings or at any stage of the Student Complaints Procedure.

- 22.5. The right of the member of staff to know the outcome.
- 22.6. The right of the member of staff to have confidentiality preserved where there is any consequential action involving the employee.
- 23. Where a complaint involving an allegation of misconduct by a member of staff is upheld this may form the basis of further action under the Disciplinary Procedure (Staff Handbook).
- 24. Whilst the complainant has the right to be told the outcome of the complaint and any compensatory decisions taken, the complainant has no right to be informed of the action taken under the Disciplinary Procedure.

STAFF INVOLVEMENT IN THE INVESTIGATION AND AS A WITNESS

- 25. It is the expectation of NCH that members of the College staff will support the operation of this Procedure. It follows therefore that staff members who are called as witness to appear before the Student Complaints Review Panel (Stage 3), or who are involved at any stage in the investigative process, are required to co-operate fully with the process, whether called on behalf of NCH or by the person making the complaint.
- 26. In exceptional circumstances a staff member may request permission to be excluded from an investigation or not to be required to appear as a witness before the Student Complaints Review Panel.
- 27. Where it is the view of the responsible officer at Stage 3 that the evidence that can be provided by the staff member is more important to the resolution of the complaint than the objections of the staff member, then the staff member will be required to participate in this process. Failure to do so may constitute a disciplinary offence.

WHAT TO DO IN CASE OF COMPLAINT – THE PROCEDURE

- 28. A complaint by a student will not normally be investigated if a period of three (3) months has elapsed since the alleged action, which is the basis of the complaint, although the Registrar may exceptionally allow such a complaint to proceed.
 - 28.1. The Procedure contains the following stages (**ANNEX 1**)
 - 28.2. Stage 1: informal discussion(s) of the complaint with the individual(s) directly involved
 - 28.3. Stage 2: the Formal Complaints Procedure
 - 28.4. Stage 3: a review by the Student Complaints Review Panel
- 29. At any point prior to the completion of Stage 3, a request for mediation made by the complainant can be instigated. Mediation will only occur with the agreement of all parties involved, and the formal complaints procedure will be suspended while mediation takes place.

STAGE 1: INFORMAL DISCUSSIONS

- 30. The College strongly encourages the informal resolution of complaints at the earliest opportunity and before the formal procedure is required. This initial informal stage should normally involve a discussion directly with the relevant member(s) of staff or with the most immediate supervisor or manager. Advice on

how to approach and resolve the matter informally and directly with the member of staff can be obtained by reading the [ANNEX 3: GUIDANCE FOR RESOLVING A COMPLAINT](#)

31. A student should begin with an informal complaint by speaking to his/her academic tutor, the SWC or another member of Student and Academic Services (SAS). In most cases, problems can be resolved at this stage. The student should speak to the same member of staff throughout the informal stage so confidentiality is maintained and the details are restricted to as few people as possible.
32. In order to ensure that the complaint is raised at a mutually convenient time, the complainant should try to arrange an appointment with the member of staff concerned. The complainant should make clear, when arranging the appointment, the matter they wish to discuss and the nature of the complaint that they wish to raise. The complainant is advised to request support from the SWC. The SWC will take notes for the meeting and provide copies for both parties.
33. The member of staff may request the presence of a colleague and the complainant themselves may also wish to be accompanied by a fellow student or their Student Representative.
34. It may be possible for the complaint to be fully addressed and resolved through a meeting between the parties concerned. If not, further enquiries may be required. In either instance, the staff member should keep a written record of the meeting and/or of any further enquiries and an oral response will be provided to the student within ten working days of the complaint being raised, except where good reason can be demonstrated for requiring a longer period.
35. The student will be informed if their complaint is upheld and if any remedy is proposed or, if the complaint is not upheld, the student will also be informed of his/her rights to proceed to Stage 2.
36. A record of the circumstances of the complaint will be retained by the Registrar in the case of a complaint against a service. This record will indicate either any corrective or compensatory action to be taken as a form of redress or the reason for the decision to reject the complaint. This record will be destroyed thirteen (13) months after resolution.
37. Where it is not possible to achieve a timely or satisfactory resolution using Stage 1 of the Procedure, a student may proceed to Stage 2.

STAGE 2: FORMAL PROCEDURE

38. If the student is unhappy with the outcome of the informal approach, they can take their complaint to the formal stage to allow the complaint to be resolved to the satisfaction of all parties through the intervention of the Head of Quality Assurance and formal investigation.
39. A formal complaint can be about any matter of College policy or administration, but not relating to a decision to expel or remove a student.
40. All formal complaints must be made in writing by completing the [ANNEX 2: FORMAL COMPLAINTS FORM](#). Guidance is provided on how to complete the form ([ANNEX 4](#)).

41. The statement written by the complainant, on the Formal Complaints Form, should also describe the steps he/she has taken to resolve the complaint informally and their reasons for not doing so.
42. On submitting the completed Formal Complaints Form and accompanying documentation to the Registrar, the complainant will be informed in writing of receipt of the complaint and an expected timeframe for a response.
43. The Registrar will confirm that the Formal Complaints Policy and Procedure is the correct NCH policy to be applied to the case.
44. The Registrar will instigate the investigation stage by asking the Head of Quality Assurance to conduct it. The Registrar will inform the student of their decision to instigate the policy within ten (10) working days of receipt of the complaint.
45. As part of the investigation, normally the Head of Quality Assurance will need to conduct meetings with the complainant and other parties involved with the complaint. Notes of these meetings will be taken and the student has the right to representation from their Student Representative.
46. Following the investigation, the Head of Quality Assurance will prepare a report that will be copied to the appropriate persons involved with the complaint, normally the complainant and the member of staff involved.
47. This report will normally be provided within twenty (20) working days of the complaint being logged with the Head of Quality Assurance, except where good reason can be demonstrated for requiring a longer period, in which case the student will be notified of the delay and of an expected response date.
48. The report will indicate if the complaint is well founded or partially founded. If the complaint is either of these, the complainant will be offered an apology, and the College will explain what measure they will be putting in place to ensure that the situation is not repeated. If the complaint is deemed not to be well founded, a full explanation will be given. Where the complaint has not been upheld, the College will also notify the complainant of their rights to proceed to Stage 3 of the Procedure.

STAGE 3: STUDENT COMPLAINTS REVIEW PANEL

49. Students are entitled to seek a review by the Student Complaints Review Panel of the decision concerning their complaint, only where there is evidence that the Stage 2 investigation:
 - 49.1. Did not include in its deliberations all relevant issues, and any relevant issues identified as not included at Stage 2 are material to the decision and do not constitute a new basis for complaint; or
 - 49.2. Was not carried out in accordance with the NCH policy.
50. This will be instigated by the student submitting a letter requesting that the complaint progresses to Stage 3. The letter must clearly state the grounds on which the case can progress to Stage 3. This letter should be submitted to the Registrar, normally within ten (10) working days of having received the outcome of the investigation report.
51. The Registrar will record and acknowledge the request for a review by the Student Complaints Review Panel, normally within ten (10) working days of receipt, and will inform the Master of the complaint.

52. The Master will nominate a Chair to convene a meeting of the Student Complaints Review Panel.
53. The Panel will consist of three senior members of the College, including members of the Executive Committee and Academic Board. All members of the Panel must not have been involved in prior stages of the Procedure. A clerk to the Panel will be nominated by the Registrar.

CONDUCT OF PROCEEDINGS

Representation

54. All students and staff members who are required to attend the meeting of the Student Complaints Review Panel will have the right to be accompanied by another individual as specified in this policy.
55. It is the responsibility of the complainant to ensure that any witnesses whom they wish to call in support of their complaint are available for the meeting of the Panel and are briefed on the arrangements for the Panel.
56. It is the responsibility of the Head of Quality Assurance to ensure that those witnesses whom NCH wishes to call in support of its decision of the complaint are available for the meeting of the Panel and are briefed on the arrangements for the Panel.

Documentation

57. The documentation submitted to the Panel will normally consist of:
 - 57.1. The Formal Complaints Form submitted by the complainant.
 - 57.2. Details of witnesses to be called by both the complainant and the Head of Quality Assurance, with a brief statement giving the purpose of the attendance of the witness.
 - 57.3. Any other background documentation.
59. All documentation will be required to be submitted by the complainant to the Clerk of the Panel not less than seven (7) working days before the meeting of the Panel.
60. Papers will be circulated to Panel members, the complainant, and, where appropriate, the individuals against whom the complaint is being made, not less than five (5) working days before the panel meeting.
61. Following the hearing, all the documentation must be returned to the Clerk of the Panel to be destroyed and a single master set of documentation will be retained by the Registrar under safe and secure conditions.

FORMAL HEARING MEETING

62. Non-attendance by either party will normally result in the hearing continuing in their absence and therefore being based only on the documentation previously submitted.
63. The proceedings of the Panel are at the discretion of the Chair but will normally be as follows:
 - 63.1. The Chair will open the proceedings by establishing that all parties have received full documentation.
 - 63.2. The Chair will also have the opportunity to raise any questions of clarification in respect of the documents submitted.

- 63.3. Where details of witnesses have been provided by either party, the Chair will have the discretion to decide not to hear any of the evidence to be provided by the witnesses, but will be required to give all parties details of the reasons for such decisions.
- 63.4. The complainant or his/her representative will be invited to outline the complaint briefly, making reference to previously submitted documentation, in support of their complaint. The complainant will also have the opportunity to call witnesses that he/she has previously notified to the Panel to provide evidence in support of his/her complaint.
- 63.5. Any new evidence that has not been presented at previous stages of the Student Complaints Procedure can only be accepted at the discretion of the Chair.
- 63.6. The Head of Quality Assurance will have the opportunity to question the complainant and/or his/her representative and the witnesses called by the complainant.
- 63.7. The Head of Quality Assurance will then have an opportunity to state their reasons for having found against the complaint, making reference to previously submitted documentation. The Head of Quality Assurance will also have the opportunity to call witnesses whose details have previously been submitted, and the complainant and/or his/her representatives will have an opportunity to question these witnesses.
- 63.8. Both parties will be provided with an opportunity to summarise their aspects of the case and at any time members of the Panel may choose to ask questions of any of the parties in order to seek clarification on points raised.
- 63.9. At the conclusion of the hearing, the Panel will meet in private in order to make its decision. The decision will be notified in writing to all concerned by the Registrar, normally within five (5) working days.
- 63.10. The decision of the Student Complaints Review Panel will be final and will bring NCH's investigation of the student's complaint to a close.
64. For undergraduate students, In accordance with the Memorandum of Agreement with the Southampton Solent University, Section 15: Student Discipline and Complaints; 15.1 Students are subject to NCH's policies, regulations and procedures relating to criminal offences and breaches of the general (non-academic) regulations of NCH and for complaints of a non-academic nature. Any alleged breach of such policies, regulations and procedures or any such complaints will be dealt with by NCH in accordance with the policies, regulations and procedures operated by NCH from time to time. In accordance with the Memorandum of Agreement, 15.2 NCH's decision in respect of non-academic complaints and non-academic disciplinary matters shall be final. NCH will issue a Completion of Procedures letter at the end of the Student Complaints Review Panel.
65. For postgraduate students, the complainant will be informed of their right to request a final review of the outcome of the complaint procedure under Swansea University's [Final Review Regulations](#). The student will be issued with a Completion of Procedures letter at the end of the Swansea University Final Review procedure.

66. Once the student has received the Completion of Procedures letter, either from NCH (undergraduate) or Swansea University (postgraduate) and they remain dissatisfied, they have the right to refer the decision to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator, within twelve (12) months of the date of the Completion of Procedures letter. Details are available [here](#).

ADDITIONAL NOTES

Confidentiality

67. Privacy and confidentiality will be maintained in the handling of complaints except where disclosure is necessary to progress the complaint.
68. A student's complaint will be:
 - 68.1. Treated seriously, fairly, transparently and with impartiality
 - 68.2. Addressed within a reasonable timescale
 - 68.3. Fully investigated
 - 68.4. Dealt with sensitively, in confidence, and without fear of recrimination
 - 68.5. Considered within the framework of the College's policies and practices
 - 68.6. Dealt with having due regard to UK legislation
69. Complaints will not always produce the outcome preferred by the complainant. Whatever the outcome, the student will be informed at the earliest possible opportunity.
70. The Registrar will maintain a record of the recommendations that arise from student complaints and monitor any response to those recommendations. An annual report on those complaints will be provided to the Academic Board and the Chief Operating Officer.

Designated contact references

71. For general complaints, the student should contact the Registrar: rosalind.barrs@nchlondon.ac.uk
72. For complaints regarding Student and Academic Services, the student should contact the Registrar: rosalind.barrs@nchlondon.ac.uk
73. For complaints regarding the Registrar, the student should contact the Master of the College: ac.grayling@nchlondon.ac.uk
74. For complaints regarding the Master of the College, the student should contact the Chair of the Board of Directors by requesting his contact details from the Chief Operating Officer: rob.farquharson@nchlondon.ac.uk
75. For complaints regarding any other College member (staff), the student should speak with the Registrar for advice on the best person to contact: rosalind.barrs@nchlondon.ac.uk

AREAS OF COMPLAINT NOT COVERED BY THIS POLICY

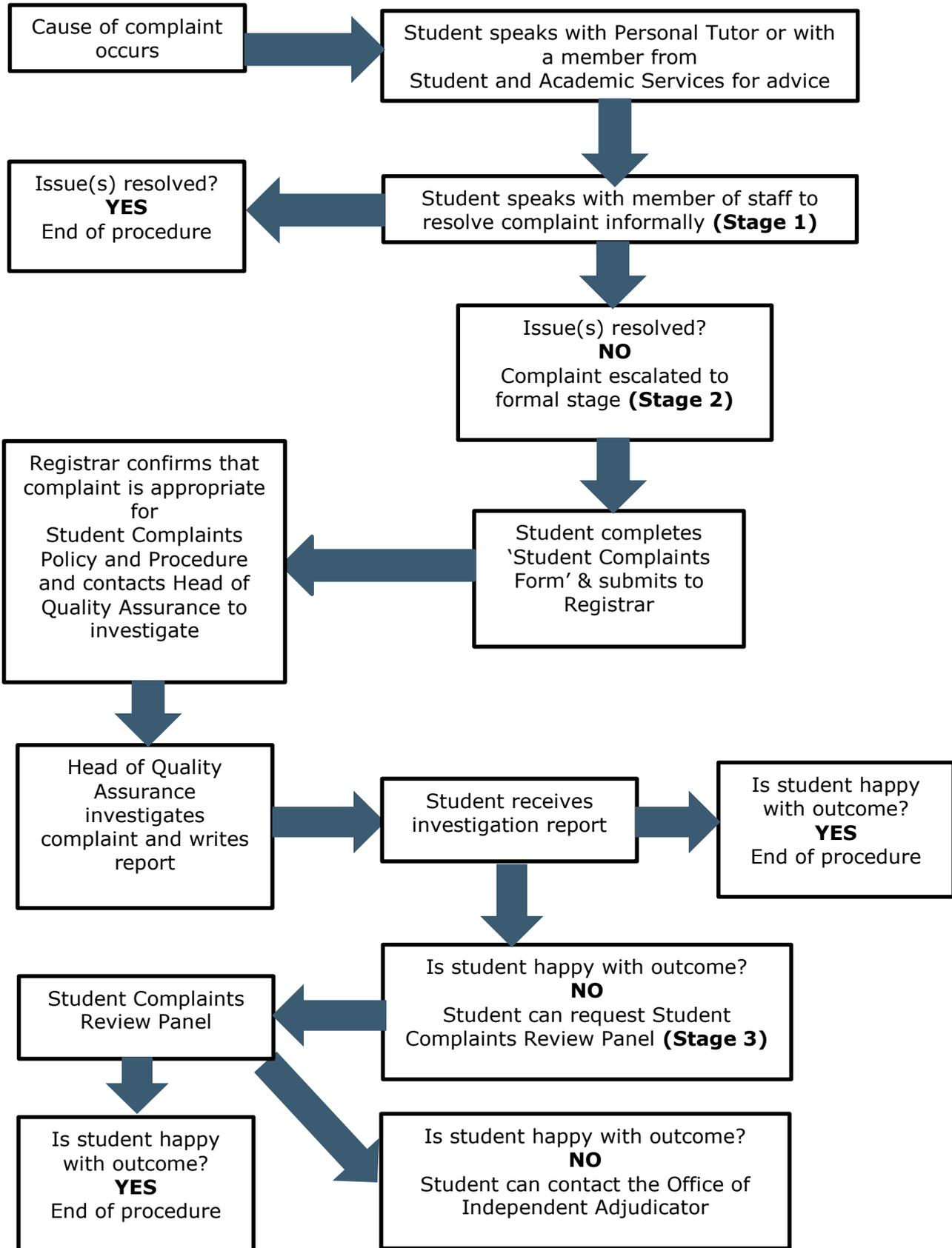
76. For any complaints relating to the University of London International Programmes policy, administration or summative assessment, the student should refer to the ULIP complaints policy which can be found [here](#).

77. For any complaints regarding academic appeals relating to the Southampton Solent University approved programmes, the student should refer to the Academic Appeals Policy which can be found [here](#).
78. For any complaints regarding academic appeals relating to the Swansea University approved programmes, the student should refer to the Academic Appeals procedure which can be found [here](#).
79. For concerns about interactions with (an)other student(s) in residences, the student should contact the residence's manager.
80. For concerns about the NCH Student Union, the student should refer to the President of the Student Union.
81. For concerns about the behaviour of (an)other student(s), the student should inform the SWC or his/her Personal Tutor (who will consider whether to refer the matter to the Student Code of Conduct and Disciplinary Procedure), or refer to the [NCH Student Discipline Policy](#).

MONITORING AND REPORTING

82. The Registrar will maintain a record of Student Complaints outcomes and ensure that appropriate action has been taken by the College in response to areas identified as requiring development.
83. An annual report on Student Complaints will be provided to the College's Academic Board.

ANNEX 1: COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE FLOWCHART



ANNEX 2: FORMAL COMPLAINTS FORM

PLEASE CONTACT STUDENT AND ACADEMIC SERVICES IF YOU REQUIRE THIS FORM IN A DIFFERENT FORMAT

You are advised to read the Guidance Notes (Annex 4) before completing this form.

PERSONAL DETAILS

FIRST NAME(S)		TITLE
FAMILY NAMES		
COLLEGE ID		
YEAR/ACADEMIC STAGE		
ADDRESS FOR CORRESPONDENCE (INCLUDING POSTCODE)		
DAYTIME PHONE		
EMAIL ADDRESS		

YOUR COMPLAINT

Please set out below the key points of your complaint.

NB: Your complaint must be summarized here even if you attach other documents.

EVIDENCE

What documentary evidence do you have to support your complaint? Please give details.

ADDITIONAL DETAILS

Who did you approach to resolve your complaint informally? What action, if any, was taken to remedy your complaint?

Name: _____ *Approximate Date:* _____

Action Taken: _____

What prevented the complaint being resolved informally?

Who else have you discussed this complaint with?

How do you propose that your complaint could be resolved to your satisfaction?

Declaration

I declare that the information given in this Formal Complaints Form is a true statement of the facts and that I would be willing, if required, to answer further questions related to it.

I also agree (in accordance with the Data Protection Act) to this form being held on file by the Registrar.

Signed:

Date:

The completed form should be handed to or posted to the Registrar where it will be logged and a receipt issued. **Please ensure you keep a copy for your own record.**

ANNEX 3: GUIDANCE FOR RESOLVING A COMPLAINT

New College of Humanities is committed to providing high quality education and services to its entire student body. The College aims to provide a supportive environment for all students and to be responsive to student concerns when they are raised. The College views the Student Complaints Policy and Procedure as an opportunity to monitor its services. There may be times when students feel that they have not received the high quality education or level of service that they are reasonably entitled to expect. The problems need addressing to ensure that normal high standards are maintained. The College undertakes to investigate all issues that are raised and to deal with them through a process that is fair, consistent, timely and easy to follow.

WHOSE COMPLAINT WILL BE CONSIDERED BY NCH?

Any current student, recent graduate or withdrawn student can make a complaint within three (3) months of the problem occurring.

WHAT CAN I COMPLAIN ABOUT?

The College will look at complaints about any aspects of its service. The complaints process will not look at matters of academic judgement or the professional conduct of students and faculty.

WHEN CAN I COMPLAIN?

You should start your informal complaint as soon as possible. Normally, a complaint will not be investigated if more than three (3) calendar months have elapsed from the original event.

CONFIDENTIALITY

This will be a confidential process, but if you are complaining about a member of staff, you will be advised that this member of staff may be told the issue. It may be impossible to reach a resolution, unless the subject is broached with the individual staff member. If you have concerns about what is communicated to the member of staff you may discuss this with the Registrar.

ANONYMOUS COMPLAINTS

It is usually very difficult to investigate a complaint that has been made anonymously but you may seek advice of the Registrar without giving your name.

THIRD PARTY COMPLAINTS

The College does not normally investigate complaints raised by a third party or a parent on behalf of a student. Occasionally a student who may be implicated may request that their nominee act on their behalf with the College.

THOSE MAKING COMPLAINTS ABOUT OTHER STUDENTS

In general, the Student Complaints Policy and Procedures is not designed to look at complaints against other students. Most of these complaints will be dealt with under the [Student Code of Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures](#).

HOW SHOULD I COMPLAIN?

Dealing with small problems or areas of concern as they arise will often lead to easy resolution. For this reason, all students must first engage with the informal complaint process. Only when this fails to reach agreement should you embark on the second stage, that of making a formal complaint.

WHO SHOULD I SEE TO SETTLE MY COMPLAINT FORMALLY?

Informal complaints can be raised with any member of staff in authority, for example, your personal tutor, a member of faculty, the Registrar, or SWC. See your Programme Handbook for contact details.

WHAT IF MY COMPLAINT IS NOT RESOLVED AT THE INFORMAL STAGE?

If you would like to pursue your complaint you may make it formal. You will need to fill out a *Formal Complaints Form* (ANNEX 2) and submit it either in person, by email, or by post – along with your documentary evidence – to the Registrar where it will be received. You should also include evidence of how you tried to resolve your complaint informally.

WHAT DO I NEED TO SAY ON MY FORMAL COMPLAINTS FORM?

You need to give full details of your complaint, the date(s) the event(s) happened, and the people you spoke to, and support these with documentary evidence such as emails, letters and notes. You should also state what you would like to happen to resolve your complaint. How to fill out the form is covered in more detail in the *Guidance on how to complete the Formal Complaints Form* (ANNEX 4).

WHAT WILL HAPPEN NEXT?

You will receive a letter of acknowledgement and you will be informed that the investigation into your complaint will be about to start. The Head of Quality Assurance will investigate your complaint. You will be notified that the Head of Quality Assurance will be in contact to discuss the complaint.

WILL I BE NOTIFIED OF THE OUTCOME?

You will receive a letter explaining the outcomes of the investigation. If your complaint is well founded or partially founded, you will be offered an apology, and the College will explain what measures they are putting in place to ensure that the situation is not repeated. If your complaint is deemed not to be well founded, a full explanation will be given. You will receive the results in writing by letter from the Registrar.

WHAT IF I DON'T LIKE THE RESULT?

You must give sound reasons as to why you think the investigation has been unfair or inadequate. Sometimes not liking the result of the investigation will not be sufficient reason for the complaint to go forward. If you have sufficient evidence that the investigation did not include all relevant issues relating to your complaint, or there was an error in the processing of your complaint, you can progress to Stage 3: Student Complaints Review Panel.

WHO IS ON THE STUDENT COMPLAINTS REVIEW PANEL?

The Panel comprises of a Chair, nominated by the Master of the College, and two senior members of the College. These members are defined as members of the Executive Committee or Academic Board. The members of this panel must not have been involved in any of the previous stages of this complaint.

WHAT WILL THE PANEL DO?

The Panel will review all the evidence and are at liberty to question the complainant and anyone who has been involved in the complaint, including the Head of Quality Assurance.

WHAT CAN I EXPECT FROM THE PANEL STAGE?

You will be entitled to bring a companion (a colleague, friend or parent) with you, providing this person is not connected to the complaint and is not a legal professional. If you do wish to bring a companion, the College has final approval and must be notified one week in advance of the review panel.

IF MY CASE IS WELL FOUNDED, WHAT CAN I EXPECT THE COLLEGE TO DO?

The College will apologise for any mistakes that it has made and try to ensure that this does not happen in the future. Each case will be looked at on its own merits and, while a range of outcomes is possible, the College will always try to achieve a resolution.

WHAT CAN I EXPECT AT THE END OF THE FORMAL COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE?

You will receive a Completion of Procedures Letter. This letter will summarise the outcome of the Formal Complaints Procedure.

THE OFFICE OF THE INDEPENDENT ADJUDICATOR

If, after receiving your Completion of Procedures Letter, you are dissatisfied with the outcome, you may wish to further your complaint with the Office of the Independent Adjudicator. This is an independent body set up by the Government to adjudicate on disputes in Higher Education Institutions. You have up to twelve (12) months from the Completion of Procedure letter to refer your complaint to the OIA. Further details are provided in the Completion of Procedures letter.

VEXATIOUS COMPLAINTS

Very few students make complaints that are vexatious, in that they persist unreasonably with their complaint or make complaints in order to make life difficult for the College rather than genuinely to resolve a grievance. This may involve making serial complaints about different matters, or continuing to raise the same or similar matters repeatedly. Complainants who are deemed to be making malicious and vexatious complaints will be written to by the College and informed that the correspondence is at an end. Complaints of this nature may result in disciplinary action under the Student Code of Conduct and Disciplinary Procedure.

If a complainant persistently telephones or sends multiple emails to the College, the College reserves the right to ask the complainant to communicate only by letter.

TRIVIAL COMPLAINTS

After a complaint has been scrutinised by the Registrar and is deemed to be frivolous or trivial, it will not be taken any further under this policy. Students making frivolous or trivial complaints will be written to by the Registrar, and advised that the complaint is not serious enough to be investigated by the College. The Registrar will keep a record of all frivolous and trivial complaints until the student graduates or leaves the College.

ANNEX 4: GUIDANCE ON HOW TO COMPLETE THE FORMAL COMPLAINTS FORM

This guidance is to support you in completing the *Formal Complaints Form* (Annex 2). You should ensure that you have read and understood the Student Complaints Policy and Procedure before completing the form.

Included in the *Student Complaints Policy and Procedures* document are guidelines to help you resolve your complaint informally before proceeding with the formal complaint route.

THE FORM

The Form must be completed fully. All fields must be filled in. If you have difficulty with the form or do not understand the Procedure, you may ask for help from Student and Academic Services.

YOUR DETAILS:

First name(s) and Family names

Please give your first name(s) and family names as shown on your College ID.

Title

Use the title you like to be called by, e.g. Mr, Miss, Ms, Mrs, Dr.

College ID

Your College ID number is shown on your College ID card.

Year of Study

This is the year you are in. For undergraduate students you are Year 1, Year 2 or Year 3. For postgraduate students, you are Year 1 (full time), Year 1 (part time) or Year 2 (part time).

Address for correspondence

Please give the address to which you would like the College to send all correspondence relating to your complaint. Bear in mind where you will be over the vacation if your complaint is made at the end of an academic term. Remember to tell us if you move when we are investigating your complaint.

Daytime Phone

Please give a phone number where you can be reached during the working day (9am – 5pm).

Email Address

Your NCH email address will be the primary email used by the College for all correspondence related to your complaint. You should check your NCH email address at least once every day and please ensure that your inbox does not become full, stopping any important emails from being accepted.

Your Complaint

You should provide full details of the issues you wish to raise here. Include dates when the events took place.

Documentary Evidence

It is very important to attach to your complaint any letters, email, notes, minutes and other written evidence you may have of what has happened. Include copies of what you have been sent and any replies that you have had. This will make it easier to investigate your complaint. You could ask someone else to give you a supporting statement if appropriate. If you are not sure what to provide, you can discuss it with SAS.

Attempts at settling your complaint informally

Tell us what you did to try to achieve an informal resolution of your complaint. Who did you see? What did you discuss? What was the outcome? When was this? Include any correspondence that you have from this process.

We cannot investigate your complaint formally until we are sure that you have attempted to settle things informally.

Step 1 might be to raise things directly with your tutor or member of staff directly where the problem has occurred.

Step 2 might be to talk to that person's line manager.

What prevented the complaint being resolved informally?

Indicate what you think prevented an informal resolution of your complaint.

Who else have you discussed this complaint with?

List anyone else you have talked to. It is useful for us to know what their job title is. Summarise what you have discussed and what advice you were given.

What would you like to happen as a result of your complaint?

Be realistic but say how you think the complaint could be resolved so that you would be happy with the outcome. This lets us know what you would like. What we offer to do will depend on the investigation of the complaint and response of the College.

Declaration

You MUST sign the form.

And finally...

You must email, post, or hand in the form to the Registrar where you will be given a receipt. Please ensure you keep a copy of the form for your records.

Title	NCH Student Complaints Policy	Author	Head of Quality Assurance
Location	NCH Academic Handbook	Approved by	Academic Board
Version	4.0	Last updated	04/01/2018
Publication date	18 January 2018	Review date	July 2019
Related policies	Student Discipline Policy & Academic Appeals Policy		
External Reference Point	UK Quality Code Chapter B9; OIA Good Practice Framework		